

M: 26/16/20

Snowden Funeral Home

246 Washington Street, Rockville

Private

Built: 1947

Snowden Funeral Home, an active family business in Rockville for more than six decades, represents the growth, stability, and commercial success of the Rockville black community. Snowden is the first and only black-owned funeral home in Rockville, and is one of only two long-time black-owned businesses in the City. The 1947 common-bonded brick two-story Colonial-detailed building replaces an earlier frame structure of similar use on this site.

# Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Magi No.

DOE yes ☒ noNR eligible: yes ☒ no  
Contrib. element in H.D.       **1. Name** (indicate preferred name)

historic

and/or common

Snowden Funeral Home

**2. Location**

street &amp; number

246 North Washington Street

       not for publication

city, town

Rockville

       vicinity of

congressional district

8th

state

Maryland

county

Montgomery

**3. Classification****Category**
☐ district  
☒ building(s)  
☐ structure  
☐ site  
☐ object
**Ownership**
☐ public  
☒ private  
☐ both
**Public Acquisition**
☐ in process  
☐ being considered  
☒ not applicable
**Status**
☒ occupied  
☐ unoccupied  
☐ work in progress
**Accessible**
☐ yes: restricted  
☐ yes: unrestricted  
☒ no
**Present Use**
☐ agriculture  
☒ commercial  
☐ educational  
☐ entertainment  
☐ government  
☐ industrial  
☐ military  
☐ museum  
☐ park  
☐ private residence  
☐ religious  
☐ scientific  
☐ transportation  
☐ other:
**4. Owner of Property** (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name

George R. Snowden and Irene Snowden Curry

street &amp; number

246 North Washington Street

telephone no.:

city, town

Rockville

state and zip code

Maryland 20850

**5. Location of Legal Description**

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc.

Montgomery County Courthouse

4716

liber

52

street &amp; number

Rockville

folio

Maryland

city, town

state

**6. Representation in Existing** Historical Surveys

title

None

date

       federal        state        county        local

pository for survey records

city, town

state

## 7. Description

Survey No. M:26/16/20

<b>Condition</b>		<b>Check one</b>	<b>Check one</b>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		date of move _____

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

This substantial common-bonded brick two-story colonial-detailed funeral home replaces an earlier building of similar use on this site, and shows the growth, stability, and commercial success of the Rockville black community. The 1947 building houses the funeral practice and once provided living space for the owner and helpers. A six-bay garage is south of the building.

The subject buildings face east on "old" North Washington Street, at the intersection of Beall Avenue. Washington Street has been realigned and widened, leaving the funeral home on a short segment of the road, where it leads to Beall Avenue. Formerly the area was mixed residential and small commercial but is now in redevelopment. Across the street (east) is a gasoline station fronting on the present Washington St. To the north is an older 1-1/2 story frame former Nash Automobile sales and service, now a sporting goods store. To the south is a large mid-rise office block, a recent redevelopment project. To the west are one-to 1-1/2 story single family residences, some now converted to commercial use.

The property has a formal landscape plan of open lawn and clipped evergreen shrubs at the front of the house, tall cedars screening the north, and mature pines west and south of the main building. A driveway, large parking apron with lawn edging, and concrete block and brick six-bay garage occupy the south half of the property.

This rectangular, two story, 5-bay by 2-bay 1947 brick commercial building has a hipped composition-shingled roof with one dormer on the south slope, a brick two-flue exterior chimney on the south facade, and a brick foundation. The north two bays project approximately eight inches. There is a one-story end-gabled screened porch on the south facade. The windows are 6/6 with mitred surrounds and flanking decorative shutters on the front.

The five-bay east (front) facade has a window in the first, third, and fifth bays on both the first and second stories, with doors in the second and fourth bays on the first story. The second bay (south) entry has a solid wood multi-panel door with a three-light overlight. The front-gabled portico is supported by two square posts with lattice panels on the sides; the gable is clad with synthetic siding. The

Continued on Attachment 7.1

Architectural Description (continued):  
Snowden Funeral Home

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entry in the fourth bay has a solid wood multi-panel door and is surrounded by a Georgian-style broken scrolled arch with a central finial. A commercial sign is between stories in the fifth (north) bay.

The one-bay north facade has a window in the north bay on the first and second stories.

The five-bay west (rear) facade has windows of mixed sizes. The second story has windows similar to the front in all bays except the second bay, south, which has a smaller 2/2 window. The first story has windows similar to the front in the two north bays and paired in the second bay, south. A smaller 2/2 window is in the third bay and a small 6/6 window is in the first bay south.

The three-bay south facade has a central dormer with one small 1/1 window and one window in each of the two west bays, second story. The first story has a single multi-light exterior door in the west bay and one window in the east bay. A end-gabled screen-and-synthetic-siding-enclosed one-story porch covers about 3/4 of the first story from the east facade almost to the west. There is a stairwell and basement door also in the west bay.

Outbuildings

To the south is a six-bay, end-gabled, one-story cinder block garage unit which faces east onto North Washington Street. The garage has one window in each north and south facade. The east (front) facade is faced with brick between the overhead six-light panel garage doors to match the main building. A large parking area is in front, accessed from North Washington Street.

# 8. Significance

Survey No. M/26/16/20

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400–1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500–1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600–1699	<input type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700–1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800–1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900–	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1947 Builder/Architect NA local history

check: Applicable Criteria: A B C D  
and/or  
Applicable Exception: A B C D E F G

Level of Significance: national state local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Snowden Funeral Home is significant as the first and only black-owned funeral home Rockville. This active family business has operated here for more than 60 years, and is one of only two long-time black-owned businesses in Rockville.

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA: Attachment 8.2  
ROCKVILLE HISTORIC RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PLAN DATA: Attachment 8.2

## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Rockville's black population spread north and westward from Middle Lane toward the end of the 19th century. Rezin Offutt purchased land from the Warren family at that time, later acquiring the site of recently burned Rockville Colored Elementary School, and by 1920 owned a large parcel along the Frederick Pike, also called Washington Street. 1/

George Russell Snowden graduated from the Rennard School of Embalming in New York City, then founded his mortuary business in Howard County in 1918. He came to Rockville in 1926, after purchasing 2 parcels of land from Rezin Offutt, one of them in conjunction with Henry Hartman. The land was located northwest of town where the Frederick Road took a decided curve. To the south was a sizeable settlement of blacks, its development pattern stemmed partly by a covenant signed by property owners along Washington Street who pledged not to sell or lease to "persons of African descent or having negro blood". 2/

Continued on Attachment 8.1

Statement of Significance/ History (continued):  
Snowden Funeral Home

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Snowden was the first, and remains the only, black-operated funeral home in Rockville. (Prior to 1926, blacks patronized the Pumphrey family business.) At first George Snowden operated out of a small frame house on the property, later constructing an apartment house to the southwest. For a time he was joined by Henry Davis, a black undertaker from Poolesville. Like the whites of that time, black morticians traditionally laid the deceased out at home, alerting neighbors by hanging crepe on the outside of the door. Mr. Snowden drove a hearse drawn by four white horses. George R. Snowden retired in 1936 due to ill health, turning the business over to his son Robert L. The elder Mr. Snowden passed away in 1948.

Robert Lee and Alma Snowden represent the second generation in the family business. In 1947, Mrs. Snowden became a licensed Maryland funeral director, actively participating in every facet of the business with her husband until she retired in 1971. In 1947, the frame building was demolished, to be replaced that same year by the present brick structure. Robert "Mike" Snowden was beloved by Rockville teenagers who played on his baseball team; Clarence "Pint" Israel, who later joined the professional Negro leagues, considered Snowden his mentor.

Robert L. Snowden continued to operate the family business until his retirement in 1974; he passed away in 1979. His son George and daughter Irene Snowden Curry have directed the funeral home since that time.

Snowden's Funeral Home prides itself on offering the traditional type of funeral. With Robert Curry joining the business founded by his great-grandfather, they are proud to claim four generations of funeral directors in Rockville. In April, 1985, the Snowden family was honored by the Montgomery County Chapter of the NAACP for community awareness, human kindness, and in recognition of a unified, achieving family.

Footnotes:

1. Montgomery County Land Records JA6/359(1887) and 1916 Deets&Maddox Real Estate Atlas.
2. Ibid, 392/69 (1925); 408/256 (1926); 374/358 (1925).

## 9. Major Bibliographical References

Survey No. MI 26116/20

Montgomery County Land and Tax records. Interviews with Rosalie Campbell, Henry Crutchfield. Newspaper articles: Montgomery County Real Estate Report (2/20/85); Frederick Post (4/13/85); The Chronical (4/17/85); Peerless Rockville files.

## 10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property 14,900 sq. ft.

Quadrangle name \_\_\_\_\_

Quadrangle scale \_\_\_\_\_

UTM References do NOT complete UTM references

A 

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Zone Easting NorthingB 

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Zone Easting NorthingC 

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D 

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E 

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F 

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G 

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H 

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### Verbal boundary description and justification

West side of North Washington Street (Frederick Road), at Beall Avenue.

### List all states and counties for properties overlapping state or county boundaries

state	code	county	code
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state	code	county	code
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## 11. Form Prepared By

name/title Eileen McGuckian / Judy Christensenorganization Peerless Rockville date May, 1988street & number P.O. Box 4262 telephone 762-0096city or town Rockville, state Maryland

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 supplement.

The survey and inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

return to: Maryland Historical Trust  
Shaw House  
21 State Circle  
Annapolis, Maryland 21401  
(301) 269-2438

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST  
STATE HISTORIC SITES INVENTORY FORM  
Statement of Significance/ History (continued):  
Snowden Funeral Home

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SURVEY# M:26/16/20  
SECTION 8 PAGE 2

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA

Geographic Organization:

Piedmont

Chronological/Developmental Period(s):

Industrial/Urban Dominance A.D. 1870-1930  
Modern Period A.D. 1930-Present

Prehistoric/Historic Period Theme(s):

Settlement/Political  
Architecture/Landscape Architecture/Community Planning  
Social/Educational/Cultural

Resource Type:

Category: Building  
Setting: Urban  
Historic Function(s) or Use(s): Funerary/mortuary/funeral home  
Known Design Source: None

ROCKVILLE HISTORIC RESOURCES MANAGEMENT PLAN DATA:

1. Geographic Organization: Piedmont, Montgomery County, Rockville
2. Chronological Period(s):  
Maturation and Expansion of the County Seat A.D.1873-1931  
County Seat to Satellite City: A.D. 1931-present
3. Historic Context Theme(s): Architecture, Landscape Architecture,  
Community Planning (Black History); Social/Educational/Cultural
4. Resource Type:  
Category : Building  
Setting: Urban  
Historic Function(s) or Use: Funerary/mortuary/funeral home  
Known Design Source: None





M:26/16/20 Snowden Funeral Home  
246 N. Washington Street  
Rockville, Montgomery Co. MD  
1/200 scale (1978 map)

SNOWDEN



Snowden Funeral Home

M: 26/16/20

Rockville, Montgomery County, Md.

246 N Washington St

East elevation

J Christensen

5/88